



OFFICE *of the* ATTORNEY GENERAL
GREG ABBOTT

June 24, 2003

Mr. Miles K. Risley
Senior Assistant City Attorney
City of Victoria
P.O. Box 1758
Victoria, Texas 77902-1758

OR2003-4339

Dear Mr. Risley:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 183261.

The City of Victoria (the "city") received a written request for "Detective Ken Jackson's notes on case #2002-00041657." You contend that the requested information is excepted from required disclosure pursuant to section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code excepts from required public disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime." Section 552.108(a)(1) protects information pertaining to a pending criminal investigation or prosecution because the release of such information presumptively would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ'g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976).

You state that the requested police report "relates to criminal cases that are currently being investigated for presentation to the Victoria County District Attorney's office." In this instance, however, you have provided this office with conflicting information, and we are unable to conclude that section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable. The requested police report indicates on its face that the case was administratively closed with no criminal charges being filed. However, you state that this investigation is ongoing. Because the submitted records

contradict your representations and you have not otherwise explained this apparent contradiction, we find that the you have failed to establish that section 552.108(a)(1) applies to the requested information, and it may not be withheld on that basis. Because you have raised no other exception to required public disclosure, we conclude that the city must release this offense report in its entirety, with the following exception.

We note that the requested police report contains an individual's driver's license number. Section 552.130(a)(1) of the Government Code requires the city to withhold "information [that] relates to . . . a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or permit issued by an agency of this state." Accordingly, the city must withhold the Texas driver's license number that we have marked pursuant to section 552.130(a)(1) of the Government Code.¹

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

¹We note, however, that the requestor has a special right of access to her own driver's license number. See Gov't Code § 552.023.

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the Texas Building and Procurement Commission at (512) 475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. We note that a third party may challenge this ruling by filing suit seeking to withhold information from a requestor. Gov't Code § 552.325. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



Sarah I. Swanson
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

SIS/RWP/sdk

Ref: ID# 183261

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Ms. Barbara Shaw
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(w/o enclosures)